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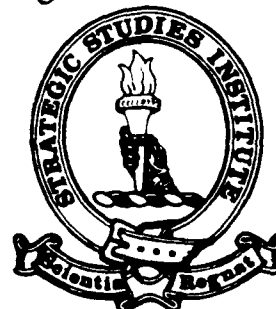
Strategic Studies Institute  
U.S. Army War College

**NEW POLITICAL-MILITARY REALITIES IN EAST ASIA:**

**AN ASSESSMENT OF U.S. INTERESTS, THREATS AND COMMITMENTS**

**The 434th Military Intelligence Detachment (Strategic)**

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NEW POLITICAL-MILITARY REALITIES IN EAST ASIA:  
AN ASSESSMENT OF U.S. INTERESTS, THREATS AND COMMITMENTS

by

The 434th Military Intelligence Detachment (S)

Final Report

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## NOTICES

### DISCLAIMER

The contents of this report represent the research and reasoning of the authors and should not be construed as an official Department of the Army position, policy, or decision unless so designated by other official documents.

### COMMENTS

Comments pertaining to this study are invited and should be forwarded to: Director, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050.

## FOREWORD

This study explores the interlocking issues of U.S. national interests, foreign threats and military obligations in East Asia. Political, military and economic factors are considered, and an effort is made to gauge U.S. public opinion on these issues.

The authors conclude that U.S. national interests in East Asia are growing at a faster rate than those in Europe. At the same time, the traditional military threat has declined, and there are no standard military responses. The authors propose an overall reduction of forward deployed U.S. military forces in East Asia to meet the demands of the new political, economic and military realities in the region.

This study was prepared by the 434th Military Intelligence Detachment (Strategic), an Army Reserve Unit, as its 1989-90 training project.

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Institute



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The forward deployment of U.S. military forces throughout the world has been a fundamental component of U.S. strategy since the end of World War II. This strategy, whose goal has been the containment of Sino-Soviet expansionism, has been founded on a legal framework of interlocking mutual defense treaties and treaty organizations such as NATO, CENTO and SEATO.

The strategy of forward deployment, and the mutual security pacts which sustain it, have resulted in the presence of U.S. military forces throughout the periphery of the Free World. For more than 40 years, these forces have helped to "keep the peace" and provide a world order "safe for democracy."

In recent years the necessity and cost effectiveness of U.S. military forward deployments have been called into question by public, congressional and academic observers. This new skepticism reflects a perceived reduction in the threat of Soviet aggression, increasing public resistance to the U.S. troop presence in many foreign countries, and the economic expense of extensive forward troop deployments to the United States.

In the context of U.S. interests in East Asia, this report assesses the interlocking issues of burgeoning economic challenges, the shifting nature of the Soviet threat, and the declining support of the U.S. public for forward U.S. military deployments.

For the purposes of this study, East Asia is defined as that area of the western Pacific which includes the Soviet Union, Japan, the two Koreas, the two Chinas, Southeast Asia and the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand. The discussion centers on five important questions:

- What are the U.S. national interests in East Asia?
- What are the threats to U.S. interests in East Asia?
- What are the military obligations of the United States in East Asia?
- What military resources has the United States committed to East Asia?
- What is the relative balance of U.S. national interests, threats, obligations, and committed military resources in East Asia?

This report concludes that, although U.S. national interests in East Asia are growing, the traditional military threat facing the United States has declined. The emergence of new political and economic threats to the United States has no standard military response. The U.S. public no longer favors sending troops to defend Asian allies, and traditional military alliances

are becoming unraveled. With the demise of the strategy of containment, U.S. policy makers must reconsider the costs, benefits and necessity of forward deployment of U.S. forces--especially ground forces stationed in South Korea. U.S. commitments seem to reflect past conditions, rather than present realities and future prospects.

## INTRODUCTION

The forward deployment of U.S. military forces throughout the world has been a fundamental component of U.S. strategy since the end of World War II. This strategy, whose goal has been the containment of Sino-Soviet expansionism, is in large part the product of a legal framework of interlocking mutual defense treaties and treaty organizations such as NATO, CENTO and SEATO in Asia. The policy from which the strategy derives was articulated in 1947 as the Truman Doctrine, and its principal architect in the 1950s was President Dwight Eisenhower's Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles.

The strategy of forward deployment, and the mutual security pacts which sustain it, have resulted in the positioning of U.S. military forces throughout the periphery of the Free World. For more than 40 years these forces have helped to "keep the peace" and provided a world order that has been "safe for democracy." As President Harry Truman noted in his memoirs, the doctrine bearing his name was the turning point in America's foreign policy; its premise was that "wherever aggression, direct or indirect, threatened the peace, the security of the United States was involved."<sup>1</sup> This policy required the American military to assume global responsibilities in support of a national strategy of containment. Some have said that this doctrine established the United States as the "policeman of the world."

In recent years the policy of containment and the strategy of forward deployment have come under criticism from many sides. Earlier this year in his first State of the Union address, President Bush stated that the "revolution of 89" had brought about change so striking that it marks the beginning of a new era in world affairs.<sup>2</sup> According to Bush, the strategy of containment is over because events in 1989 had swept away a "world whose fundamental features were defined in 1945."<sup>3</sup> One month later, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney announced that the United States and South Korea had agreed to the withdrawal of several thousand troops over the next 3 years as Korea "takes the lead" in its own defense.<sup>4</sup> To an extent the motivating force behind these events, at least from the American perspective, has been the growing restlessness of the American people. According to one Congressperson:

A growing number of American people feel abused by our allies. They feel that we spend a much greater portion of our wealth on the common defense; that we have too large a number of soldiers stationed on their territory; and that the allies use the money they save on defense to subsidize their trade, creating our enormous trade deficit.<sup>5</sup>

At a time when Americans are concerned about the growing federal budget deficit, mounting trade imbalances and the threat of new taxes, the concept of a "peace dividend" through reduced military expenditures is particularly attractive. This public

skepticism is fueled further by the "new thinking" emanating from the current leadership of the Soviet Union where the twin policies of glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring) have raised expectations that the "evil empire" is a relic of history. According to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, these policies will bring about reduced military spending, a corresponding decrease in Soviet military activity, increased incentives to slow the arms race, and better relations with the Free World.

Clearly the interlocking issues of U.S. military strategy, burgeoning economic challenges, the shifting nature of the Soviet threat, and the demise of long-standing policies of containment and forward deployment define the problems facing the military planner now and tomorrow. This report assesses these issues in the context of U.S. interests in East Asia.

#### DEFINITIONS, KEY QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

East Asia is that area of the western Pacific which includes the Soviet Union (USSR), Japan, the two Koreas, the two Chinas, Southeast Asia and the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand (see Figure 1). This report addresses the fundamental issue of U.S. military commitments in East Asia. Stated simply, the problem is that military alliances established after World War II between the United States and several East Asian countries call for the forward deployment and commitment of U.S. military forces in the event of hostilities. With the passage of time, U.S. military and economic power has diminished relative to that of some of its Pacific allies. The threat to the region has also changed as has the American public's perception of that threat. And yet the commitments still remain after more than 30 years.

Essential elements of the analysis focus on five key questions:

-- What are the U.S. national interests in East Asia?

-- What are the threats to U.S. interests in East Asia?

-- What are the military obligations of the United States in East Asia?

-- What military resources has the United States committed to East Asia?

-- What is the relative balance of U.S. national interests, threats, obligations, and committed military resources in East Asia?

Political, economic and military developments since World War II are summarized, with emphasis on the last decade. The threat is studied in light of recent developments, and current force deployments are reviewed to analyze the balance between resource allocation and economic benefits. Official documents



## ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

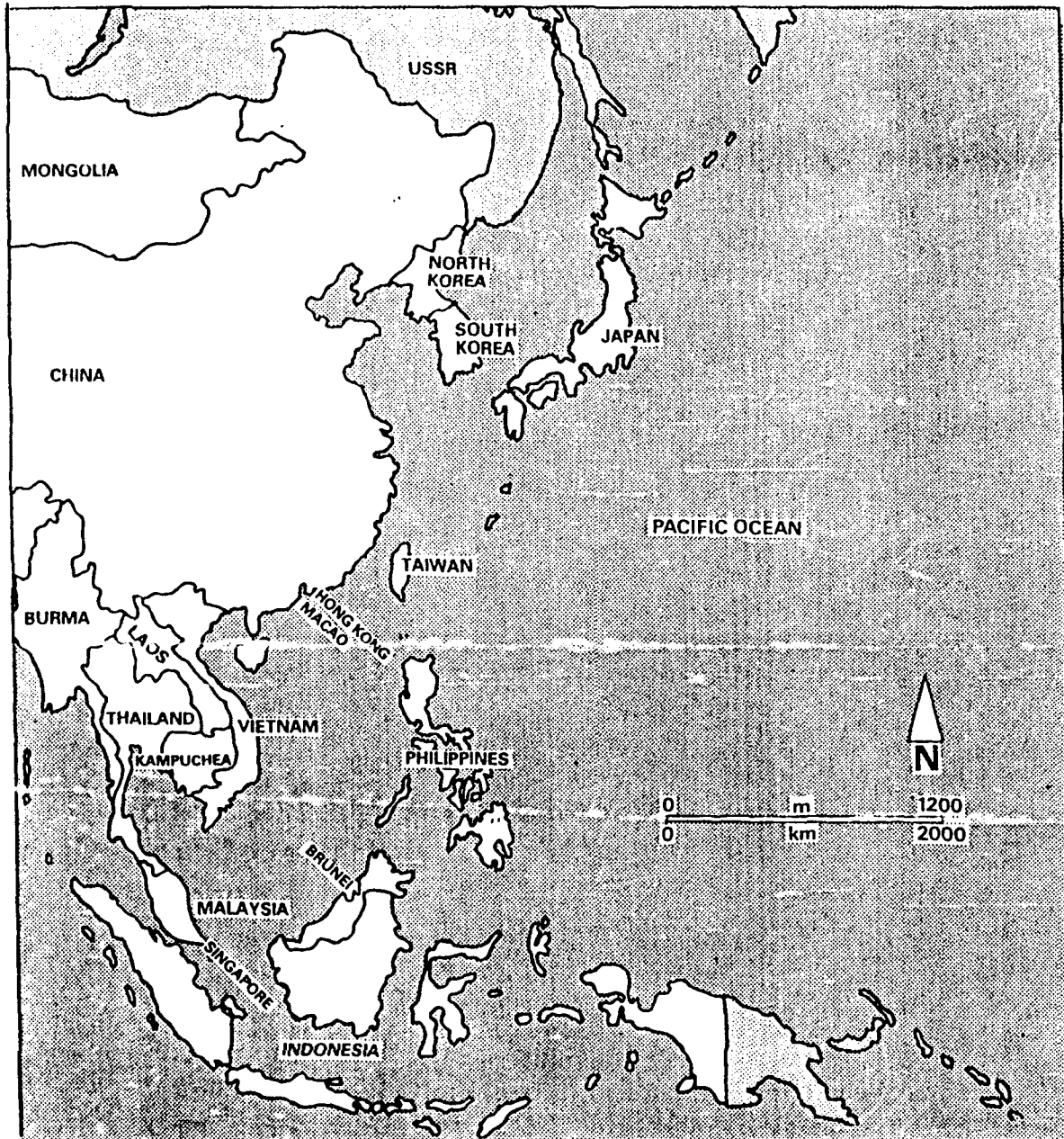


Figure 1

relating to U.S. legal obligations in East Asia have been examined and U.S. forces currently committed to the region are briefly enumerated.

### NATIONAL INTERESTS

The U.S. national interest has been defined as "being concerned with the well-being of the American people and enterprise outside the United States and thus beyond the administrative jurisdiction of the U.S. Government." It differs from the "public interest," which is the "well-being of the American people and American enterprise within the territorial boundaries of the United States."<sup>6</sup>

U.S. military involvements--that is, commitments, deployments and engagements--generally flow from a perception of national interest. Since the late 1940s, the United States has maintained a substantial and ongoing military involvement in East Asia based on the perceived importance of this region to U.S. interests and security. This involvement included the world's only use of atomic weapons in Japan in the 1940s, the Korean War in the 1950s, and the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 1970s. No equivalent expenditure of U.S. weapons, equipment and manpower has occurred elsewhere in the world during the same period. The nation's current political, economic and military interests in the area are substantial.

Politically, the U.S. relationship with Japan is the most important strategic interest in East Asia today. This relationship is the keystone of U.S. defense policy and rivals in importance the U.S. relationship with the United Kingdom and Federal Republic of Germany in Europe. Of secondary importance is the traditional U.S. relationship with the Philippines--our only former colony--and South Korea. Public opinion polls indicate that 78 percent of the American public and 98 percent of the leadership consider Japan a "vital interest" of the United States, and 53 percent of the American public would support sending U.S. forces to defend Japan. By contrast, 73 percent of the U.S. public considers the Philippines a "vital interest," and only 25 percent of the American people would support the commitment of U.S. forces to defend the People's Republic of China (PRC), South Korea or Taiwan.<sup>7</sup> Public opinion polls are an important means of judging support for U.S. military policies, expenditures and deployments of personnel in East Asia.

Economic interests and assets in East Asia also are substantial, and again the U.S. relationship with Japan is predominant. After emerging from the rubble of World War II, Japan currently has the second largest gross national product (GNP) in the world, second only to the United States, and an annual per capita income of \$19,400--almost \$2,000 more than the per capita income of the United States! Japan is the largest creditor nation in the world and finances a substantial portion of the U.S. national debt each year. In 1987, U.S. exports to Japan ranked second after those to neighboring Canada, and

imports from Japan topped the list of all nations, leaving a \$60 billion trade deficit overall (see Table 1 and Figure 2).

### LARGEST SURPLUS AND DEFICIT BILATERAL U.S. TRADE BALANCES, 1987

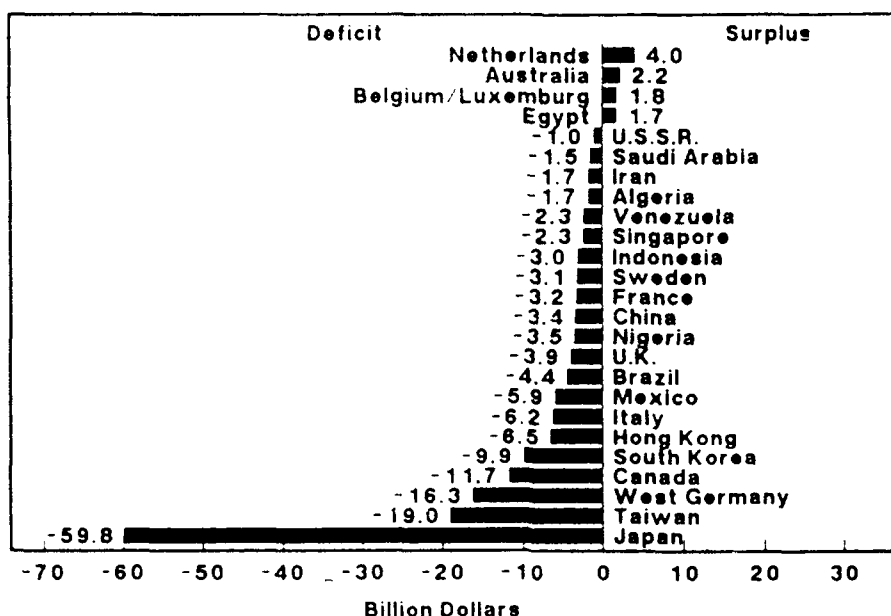


Figure 2

Taiwan and South Korea also are important to the United States economically. In 1987, South Korea ranked seventh and Taiwan ninth in exports to the United States, while Taiwan was fourth and South Korea seventh in imports from the United States (see Table 2). Taiwan garnered a \$19 billion surplus in trade with the United States in 1987, while South Korea acquired \$10 billion.<sup>8</sup> By most measures, U.S. economic interests in East Asia are increasing rather than declining. This trend becomes more dramatic when contrasted with U.S. economic interests in Europe. In 1981, U.S. imports from and exports to Japan, South Korea and Taiwan totaled \$85.2 billion, while the same figure for the nations of the European Community was \$100.23 billion. In 1987, U.S. trade for these three Asian countries reached \$176.2 billion while that of the European Community totaled \$145.5 billion.<sup>9</sup>

U.S. military interests in East Asia are extensive. The nation's relationship with Japan is most vital because the geographical location of the archipelago places it between the U.S. homeland and the powerful rivals of China and the Soviet Union. In addition, the Japanese Self-Defense Forces constitute a substantial capability, are closely linked to the U.S. military, and provide an important deterrent force in the region. The Philippines is another important military interest of the United States because of the presence of Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base, both of which provide unique force projection

TOP 50 U.S. PARTNERS IN TOTAL TRADE IN 1987  
(Domestic and Foreign Merchandise, FAS; General Imports, CIF; Millions of Dollars)

	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Canada.....	91,429	84,679	95,891	118,688	122,715	124,174	131,325
Japan.....	61,727	60,898	65,453	83,946	95,011	112,338	116,322
Germany, West.....	22,194	21,794	21,966	26,894	30,282	36,689	39,776
Mexico.....	31,802	27,587	26,100	30,259	33,027	29,950	35,102
Taiwan.....	12,936	13,954	16,777	21,092	22,461	26,776	33,819
United Kingdom.....	25,755	24,186	23,521	27,254	26,846	27,451	32,111
Korea, South.....	10,590	11,540	13,582	16,010	16,669	19,852	26,090
France.....	13,480	12,925	12,269	14,553	16,055	17,802	19,120
Italy.....	10,909	10,272	9,727	12,879	15,006	16,150	17,228
Hong Kong.....	8,393	8,348	9,388	11,961	11,780	12,504	14,473
Brazil.....	8,650	8,066	7,938	10,912	11,286	11,225	12,473
Netherlands.....	11,115	11,256	10,916	11,884	11,637	12,210	12,452
Belgium/Luxembourg.....	8,173	7,731	7,559	8,588	8,484	9,590	10,549
Singapore.....	5,198	5,438	6,728	7,795	7,888	8,265	10,448
China.....	5,665	5,414	4,650	6,385	8,080	8,347	10,408
Venezuela.....	11,245	10,163	7,984	10,197	10,230	8,587	9,467
Australia.....	7,949	7,087	6,376	7,692	8,509	8,424	8,782
Saudi Arabia.....	22,565	16,886	11,744	9,573	6,501	7,503	8,260
Switzerland.....	5,526	5,101	5,512	5,762	5,866	8,344	7,514
Sweden.....	3,641	3,781	4,130	4,969	6,264	6,507	6,875
Spain.....	5,228	5,228	4,603	5,189	5,297	5,570	6,250
Israel.....	3,801	3,479	3,316	4,003	4,780	4,744	5,855
Malaysia.....	3,809	3,695	3,889	4,681	3,939	4,264	4,950
Indonesia.....	7,715	6,533	7,123	7,084	5,728	4,621	4,486
India.....	3,072	3,121	4,161	4,306	4,120	4,001	4,189
Philippines.....	3,948	3,809	3,966	4,389	3,713	3,514	4,080
Nigeria.....	11,077	8,568	4,746	3,182	3,784	3,090	4,062
Thailand.....	2,178	1,871	2,098	2,538	2,392	2,809	3,931
Colombia.....	2,671	2,786	2,572	2,703	2,924	3,358	3,826
Ireland.....	1,547	1,565	1,698	2,228	2,284	2,480	2,966
Denmark.....	1,785	1,688	1,775	2,123	2,502	2,627	2,774
Egypt.....	2,571	3,444	3,138	2,886	2,407	2,105	2,709
South Africa.....	5,464	4,416	4,228	4,843	3,385	3,634	2,680
Algeria.....	5,925	3,701	4,410	4,291	2,857	2,433	2,571
Turkey.....	1,065	1,158	1,120	1,713	1,940	1,850	2,380
Dominican Republic.....	1,749	1,333	1,487	1,713	1,773	2,059	2,359
Norway.....	3,451	2,997	2,245	2,863	1,915	2,108	2,356
Argentina.....	3,406	2,516	1,903	1,942	1,889	1,882	2,266
Ecuador.....	1,957	2,055	2,117	2,458	2,567	2,204	2,011
New Zealand.....	1,741	1,767	1,448	1,587	1,696	1,978	1,999
USSR.....	2,717	2,840	2,378	3,884	2,866	1,853	1,950
Chile.....	2,126	1,654	1,781	1,676	1,540	1,758	1,901
Iran.....	366	734	1,357	892	837	646	1,806
Peru.....	2,763	2,267	2,103	2,153	1,648	1,551	1,629
Finland.....	1,178	937	957	1,207	1,414	1,367	1,600
Austria.....	884	886	839	1,135	1,331	1,376	1,528
Angola.....	1,207	882	1,039	1,156	1,231	815	1,467
United Arab Emirates.....	3,179	3,240	1,405	1,973	1,318	884	1,343
Yugoslavia.....	1,119	885	996	959	1,195	1,241	1,332
Costa Rica.....	800	750	835	966	992	1,204	1,332

Table 1

capabilities in the region. South Korea also serves as a forward base for more than 40,000 U.S. troops.

**Ten Top U.S. Trading Partners in 1987**  
(Domestic & foreign exports, f.a.s.; General imports, c.i.f.)  
(Values in billions of dollars)

Exports				Imports			
Country	1986	1987	Percent of 1987 Exports	Country	1986	1987	Percent of 1987 Imports
Canada .....	\$55,512	\$59,814	23.7	Japan .....	\$85,457	\$88,074	20.8
Japan .....	26,882	28,249	11.2	Canada .....	68,662	71,510	16.9
Mexico .....	12,392	14,582	5.8	West Germany .....	26,128	28,028	6.6
United Kingdom .....	11,418	14,114	5.6	Taiwan .....	21,251	26,406	6.2
West Germany .....	10,561	11,748	4.6	Mexico .....	17,558	20,520	4.8
Netherlands .....	7,347	8,217	3.2	United Kingdom .....	16,033	17,998	4.2
South Korea .....	6,345	8,099	3.2	South Korea .....	13,497	17,991	4.2
France .....	7,216	7,943	3.1	Italy .....	11,312	11,698	2.8
Taiwan .....	5,524	7,413	2.9	France .....	10,586	11,177	2.6
Belgium/Luxembourg .....	5,399	6,189	2.4	Hong Kong .....	9,474	10,490	2.5
			65.7				71.6

Table 2

As a consequence of its obligations and interests, U.S. policy is to protect its citizens and property in East Asia, to keep the sea lanes of communication open, to guarantee unimpeded access to markets, to "show the flag" through military "presence," and to enhance the well-being of friendly nations of the region. This policy, in turn, has been translated into specific military missions. The U.S. Army in East Asia, for example, is engaged in missions to:

- reinforce deterrence of hostile land-force aggression against allies and friends;
- respond to enemy land force incursion to restore the regional balance if deterrence fails;
- conduct nation assistance;
- protect U.S. air, sea and land bases;
- conduct intelligence gathering and strategic target identification;
- conduct counterterrorist operations; and
- evacuate U.S. nationals in crisis situations.<sup>10</sup>

By most measures, the United States has the means to

exercise power in East Asia. American power relative to other countries may have decreased from 1950 to the present, but this could be expected considering the state of the world after World War II. In aggregate terms the United States continues to be the most powerful nation on earth, especially in terms of its economy. In 1987, the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) was almost three times that of Japan and the USSR. While deficits are a matter of concern, the deficit-to-GNP (gross national product) in 1988 was 3.1 percent, a level which compares favorably to 3.8 percent in 1983 and 4.1 percent in 1975. Finally, whereas the U.S. national debt relative to GNP has risen from 34.2 percent in 1980 to 54.9 percent in 1988, this is comparable to the range experienced during the Kennedy administration, and "far lower than the levels reached during and immediately after World War II, when national debt peaked at 127.3 percent of GNP in 1946."<sup>11</sup>

### THREATS IN PACIFIC EAST ASIA

The Soviet Union and its allies, principally the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea) and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV), pose the broadest nuclear and conventional military threats in East Asia. To a great extent, this threat is landbased. In spite of the dramatic growth of Soviet seapower over the past decade, the United States maintains a considerable advantage over the Soviets in strictly naval forces.<sup>12</sup> This critical advantage holds true even when the combined naval forces of the USSR, DPRK, and SRV are compared to the U.S. and its allied forces.<sup>13</sup> New Soviet naval and air bases in Cam Ranh Bay and Da Nang, SRV, have increased the USSR potential threat to sea and air lanes of communication in East Asia. In addition, past Soviet support of the DPRK and the SRV has been considered threatening to the ROK and Thailand, both of which are U.S. allies. In assessing this threat, it is important to note that, despite the increased capabilities the USSR has obtained through the growth of its seapower in East Asia, it has not yet made any specific challenges to the sea and air lanes of communication. In fact, evidence suggests that in recent years the Soviets have been scaling back on their naval operations. Admiral William J. Crowe, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, observed that "there is no question that we have seen less forward naval deployments," and that:

the latest U.S. figures...show that there has been a significant decline in the deployment of Soviet naval forces since 1984. The decline affects deployments of Soviet destroyers, frigates, corvettes, logistics ships, attack submarines and submarines that carry nuclear-tipped ballistic and cruise missiles.<sup>14</sup>

Soviet land forces, which have a clear superiority over U.S. land forces in the region, have not engaged in any offensive activities since the border clashes with the PRC more than two decades ago; in fact, Soviet leadership has expressed an interest

in moderating its policies in East Asia. In a major speech in Vladivostok in 1986, Premier Gorbachev stated:

There is the possibility of not only getting rid of the dangerous tension in the Korea peninsula, but of beginning a movement along the path of solving the national problem of the entire Korean people. Second, we are in favor of putting a barrier in the path of the proliferation and buildup of nuclear arms in Asia and the Pacific. Third, we propose starting talks on reducing the activities of naval fleets--primarily ships equipped with nuclear arms--in the Pacific Ocean. In general, I would like to say that if the United States were to renounce a military presence, say in the Philippines, we should not be found wanting of any response.<sup>15</sup>

More recently, Gorbachev promised to withdraw 260,000 ground troops from Asia, further defusing Sino-Soviet tensions.<sup>16</sup> And in May 1989, he made an historic trip to Peking during which Chinese Chairman Deng Xiaoping proclaimed "we can publicly announce the normalization of relations between our two countries."<sup>17</sup> These overtures represent a potentially less threatening alternative to the Brezhnev Doctrine of military expansion, they have eased tensions generally in East Asia, and could provide the seeds of an overall reduction of U.S. and Soviet military presence in the region.

In terms of unconventional warfare, the greatest threat in East Asia is posed by the leftist insurgency in the Philippines. The New Peoples Army (NPA) has expanded steadily in recent years, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has not been an effective counterforce. Although the departure of the corrupt Marcos regime in 1986 eased the volatility of the threat somewhat, the current situation remains unstable. This instability grows out of the failure of the Aquino administration to negotiate a ceasefire with the NPA, to implement meaningful land reform and to address other economic problems that have fueled the insurgency. Finally Aquino is personally unpopular with the AFP, whose leaders have attempted to oust her on several occasions.

An easing of tensions has occurred in the area of nuclear proliferation, however. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty provides for a reduction to zero of Soviet intermediate-range nuclear forces in East Asia. Although the ROK and the ROC have shown some interest in developing a nuclear capability, the United States, USSR and the PRC continue to be the only nuclear powers in East Asia. It does not appear likely that there will be any escalation in the nuclear threat in the near term.

Finally, the SRV troop withdrawal from Cambodia, a growing dialogue between North and South Korea, the withdrawal of 112,000 Soviet troops from Afghanistan, the proposed reduction of 260,000

Soviet troops from central Asia and the Far East, the redirection of Soviet INF in Asia to zero, the withdrawal of 60,000 Soviet troops from Mongolia, and China's withdrawal of 1,000,000 troops from the Soviet border all have contributed to the reduction of tensions in the region. These dramatic events have substantially reduced the Soviet military threat facing the United States in East Asia.

In an economically interdependent world, it is not sufficient to address the purely military nature of threats to U.S. interests abroad. Economic power and coercion can also threaten a nation's interests. A potent economic and business competitor, Japan poses a major economic threat to the United States in East Asia as illustrated by a hypothetical scenario recently presented in Time magazine:

The year is 1992. A local conflict has closed the Strait of Malacca, blocking Japanese tankers laden with Persian Gulf oil.... The Japanese Prime Minister places a call to the White House. "Good evening, Mr. President," he says. "Would you consider sending the U.S. Navy to escort my ships through the strait?" Pause. The President is well aware that the request is coming from America's biggest creditor. "Why, yes, of course," he replies. The Prime Minister thanks him, adding, "I am certain that your help will reassure our private investors enough so that they will buy their usual share of Treasury bills at next Tuesday's auction."<sup>18</sup>

The U.S. trade imbalance with Japan is a real and growing threat (see Table 3). In a public opinion poll, 68 percent of the American respondents stated that the economic threat from Japan is "more serious" than the military threat from the Soviet Union; only 22 percent felt that the Soviet military threat was more serious. Although Japan is the most important U.S. military ally in East Asia, her economic strength inheres a substantial capability to coerce other powers in the region to include the United States.<sup>19</sup> To a lesser extent, the United States is also threatened by the combined economic strength of the so-called "Four Tigers" of the Far East--Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore. Categorized as newly industrialized countries (NICs), their trade imbalances with the United States display the same threatening trend as that of Japan (see Table 4). Nor is this pattern changing. The largest changes in U.S. bilateral imbalances in 1986-87 involved Taiwan, South Korea, China and Japan (see Figure 3). Clearly, economic clout must be factored into any future threat assessment of the region.



## U.S. TRADE WITH JAPAN 1981-1987

Billion Dollars

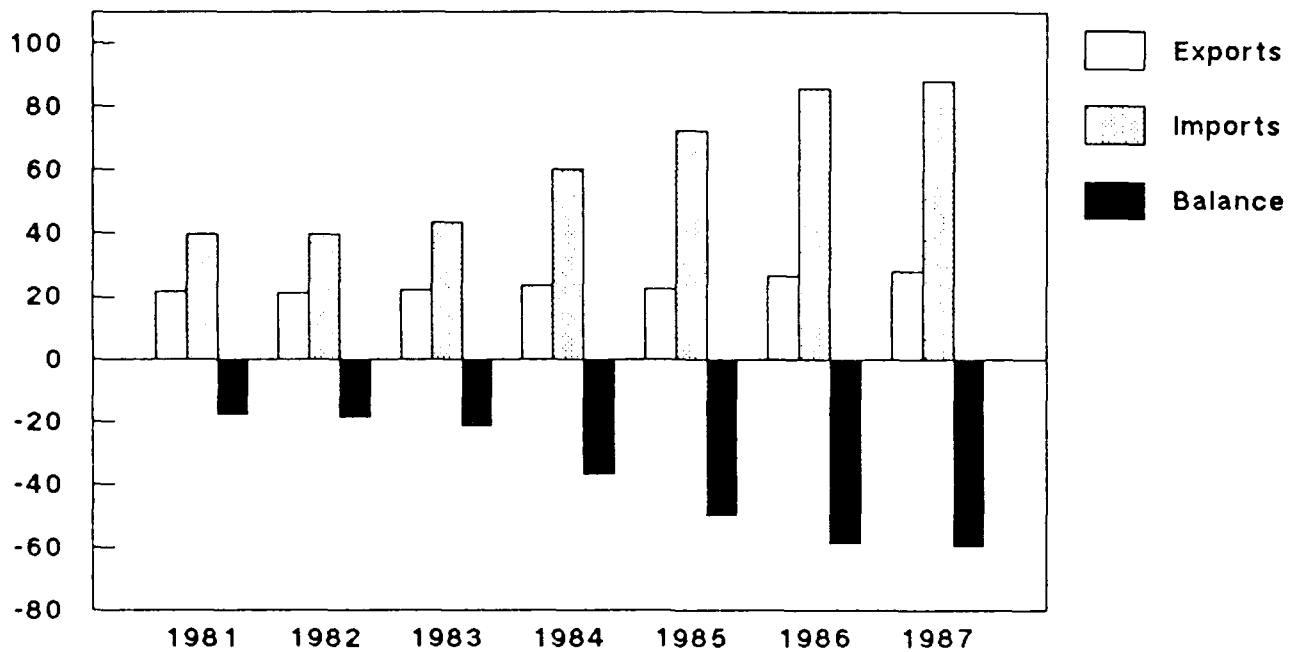


Table 3

## U.S. TRADE WITH THE EAST ASIA NICs 1981-1987

Billion Dollars

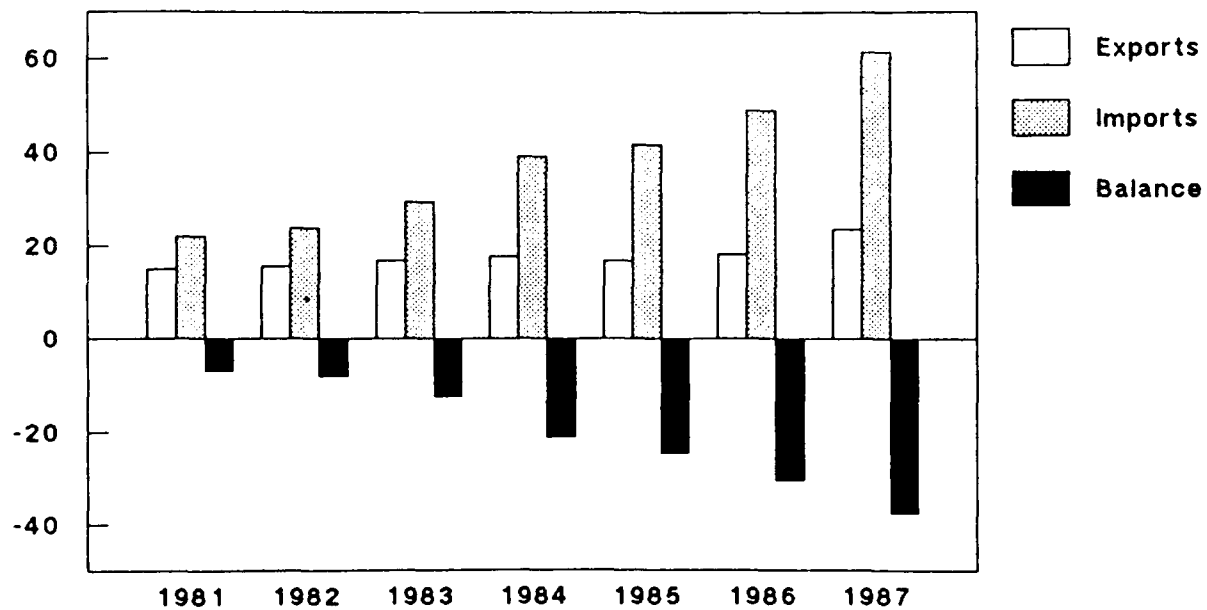


Table 4

## LARGEST CHANGES IN U.S. BILATERAL TRADE BALANCES, 1986 - 1987

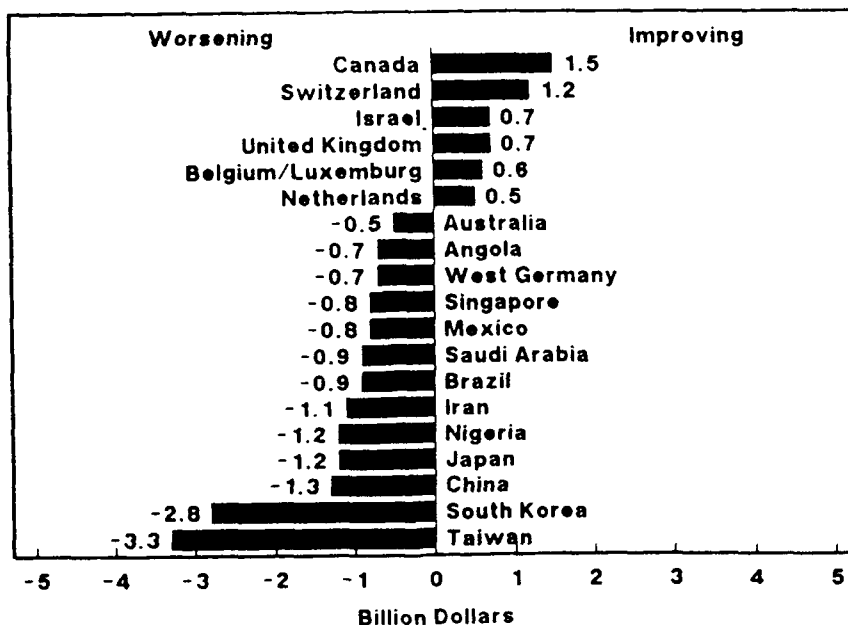


Figure 3

A third threat to U.S. interests in East Asia involves an increasingly common anti-Americanism. Ironically, as is true with most economic threats, these political threats to the United States come as much from allies as from traditional enemies. Anti-American riots in South Korea and the Philippines have focused public attention on the need to reduce U.S. military forces in both countries. Similarly, antinuclear movements have succeeded in banning U.S. warships from ports in New Zealand since 1985. President Cory Aquino's February 1990 snub of visiting U.S. Secretary of Defense Cheney is just the most recent and high-level example of anti-Americanism in the Philippines. Clearly the intensification of anti-American activities complicates the U.S. strategy of forward deployment, which is, in many ways, a political and military response to an international situation that no longer exists.

### MILITARY OBLIGATIONS

U.S. legal obligations in East Asia derive from a set of bilateral and multilateral treaties and agreements that provide for the "mutual defense" of the signatory parties. Most of these legal obligations were assumed in the early 1950s in an effort to "contain" what was feared to be a massive and expanding Sino-Soviet Bloc. In his memoirs about this period, former Secretary of State Dean Acheson described the Pacific "defense perimeter" as follows:

Our defense stations beyond the western hemisphere and

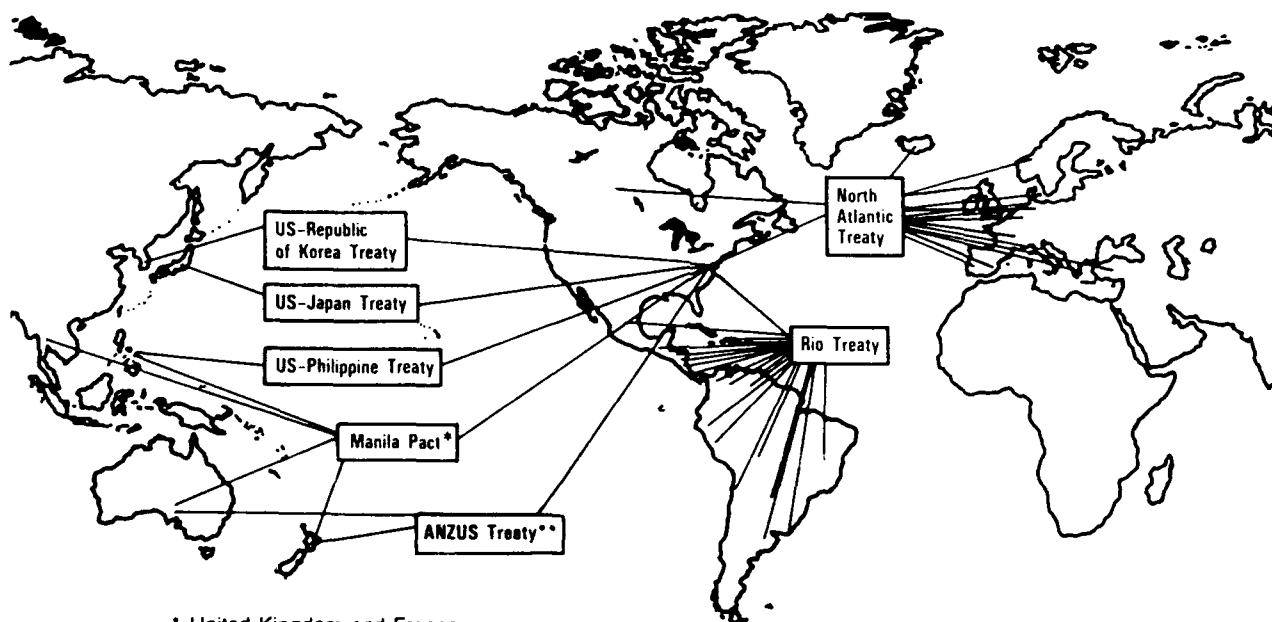
our island possessions were the Philippines and the defeated, disarmed and occupied Japan. These were our inescapable responsibilities. We had moved our line of defense, a line fortified and manned by our own ground, sea and air forces, to the very edge of the Western Pacific.<sup>20</sup>

Most of these treaty obligations originally required the United States to respond to "direct or indirect aggression," or to "armed attack." However, Acheson later wrote that the Nixon Doctrine of the 1970s "made it clear that countries allied with the United States, particularly those in Asia, would be expected to bear the brunt of ground combat if they were attacked by hostile forces and that the United States would rely on its air and naval power to support them."<sup>21</sup>

The United States currently has in effect more than 40 bilateral treaties and agreements with Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines (several of which are depicted in Figure 4).<sup>22</sup>

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#### United States Collective Defense Arrangements



\* United Kingdom and France

\*\* As of 11 August 1986, the US suspended security obligations to New Zealand

As of 30 September 1987

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Figure 4

The United States is also signatory to the South-East Asia Collective Defense Treaty (SEACDT) with the governments of Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and the United Kingdom; and the Pacific Security Treaty, better known as the ANZUS Pact, a tripartite security treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States.<sup>23</sup> Although the United States abrogated the Mutual Defense Treaty with the Republic of China (Taiwan) in 1979, this obligation was supplanted in the same year by the Taiwan Relations Act which ensures that "the U.S. will make available to Taiwan such defense articles and services in such quantity as be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability."<sup>24</sup>

It is prudent to ask whether these treaty obligations continue to serve U.S. national interests and whether they are binding and, therefore, imperative factors in the development of U.S. strategy. In the words of one legal scholar, "no one and nothing can guarantee, in advance, adherence to a treaty."<sup>25</sup> The consideration here, however, is not whether the United States would meet its treaty obligations, but whether it would be legally obligated to do so. Under the U.S. Constitution, a treaty is made by the President "by and with the advice and consent of the Senate"; as such, it is law. Given this, it could be expected that treaties would be honored in letter and in spirit, both for legal reasons and for the benefits that accrue thereof. For example:

(Treaty) members develop habits of thought as well as habits and machinery of cooperation. A web of associated relations, strong or weak depending on the will and capacities of the parties and their usefulness to one another, gets spun around the treaty. The honoring of a treaty may itself be seen as a national interest, especially in a democracy.<sup>26</sup>

In spite of this fundamental expectation, however, U.S. multilateral treaty relations in East Asia have lacked the stability of the NATO Alliance. The South-East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) was dissolved in 1977, after Pakistan and France withdrew, and in 1986 the United States suspended its security obligations to New Zealand under the ANZUS Pact because of that country's nuclear-free-zone policies. The abrogation of the Mutual Defense Treaty with the Republic of China (Taiwan) left the bilateral treaties with Japan, South Korea and the Philippines as the principal U.S. military obligations in East Asia. The devolution of U.S. multilateral treaty obligations there reflects the changing attitudes of both the United States and her allies. As the Communist threat diminishes, so does the imperative for bilateral and multilateral mutual defense treaties.

#### MILITARY RESOURCES

The United States continues to employ substantial military resources in East Asia (see Table 5).<sup>27</sup> All three services have

forces located in Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines. U.S. forces in Japan and South Korea not only help to defend those particular nations, but have a deterrent effect in the region and serve as "tripwires" against direct aggression. The deployment of U.S. forces in the Philippines, by contrast, has had less impact on local defense needs regarding the insurgent threat. Instead, these forces are intended to serve U.S. strategic interests in the region by providing facilities for forward deployment and force projection. In addition, the U.S. Seventh Fleet has a substantial force capability afloat in the region.

<u>U.S. Forces in Korea</u>		<u>U.S. Forces in Japan</u>	
Army:	1 Infantry division	Army:	Support unit
Air Force:	1 Tactical fighter wing	Air Force:	1 Tactical fighter wing
Navy:	Support units		1 Strategic wing
<hr/>		<hr/>	
<u>Strength</u>		<u>Strength</u>	
Army:	29,000	Army:	2,400
Air Force:	9,000	Air Force:	14,300
Navy/Marines:	700	Navy:	7,100
Combat aircraft:	120	Marines:	23,500
<hr/>		Aircraft:	260
<hr/>		<hr/>	
<u>U.S. Forces in the Philippines</u>		<u>U.S. Seventh Fleet (Afloat)</u>	
Air Force:	1 Tactical fighter wing	Ships:	60
	1 Tactical air transport wing	Aircraft:	240
Navy:	1 Air patrol squadron	Personnel:	31,800
<hr/>		<hr/>	
<u>Strength</u>			
Army:	476		
Air Force:	8,600		
Navy/Marines:	1,900		
Aircraft:	140		
<hr/>			

Table 5

## BALANCE OF ISSUES

In a perfect world, the United States would achieve a balance among its interests, obligations, threats and resources. Obligations would flow directly from our interests, and resources would be allocated to meet all threats. In East Asia, however, such economic, political and military symbiosis is elusive because dynamic interests, shifting obligations, changing threats, and increasingly limited resources create imbalances which, in turn, alter the risks and produce redundancy or waste. Contributing to these problems is the fact that East Asia is geographically extensive, culturally diverse, politically

multipolar and economically vigorous. Militarily, the region lends itself more to U.S. air and sea power than to ground force operations. Successful military alignments with the United States tend to be bilateral in nature although political alignments are often multipolar. These variables make it difficult to assess the military balance in East Asia, and complicate the process of determining whether or not the United States is overcommitted or undercommitted. Nonetheless, certain judgments can be drawn.

Generally speaking, the United States has been extraordinarily successful in avoiding overcommitment and achieving a situation of "force balance" in East Asia in the post-World War II era. The Soviet Union has not successfully employed military force to expand its empire in the Far East. Although Communist forces in China and North Vietnam have united their countries through the force of arms, military adventures beyond their traditional borders have been either insignificant or unsuccessful. Since 1954, a stable military balance has existed between the two Koreas. To date, the leftist military insurgency in the Philippines remains frustrated in its efforts to gain political power by force. Any disequilibrium caused by the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Taiwan has been more than offset by diplomatic initiatives with the PRC--at least thus far.

In spite of the more positive aspects of the situation, however, several areas can still be identified in which changing circumstances appear to be creating risks or wasting resources. Rising anti-Americanism and burdensome costs of maintaining troops in South Korea; instability in the Philippines, including terrorist attacks against American servicemen; and growing public perceptions about Japan and our trade imbalances are but a few examples of the shifting economic, political and military conditions in East Asia.

A basic tenet of U.S. strategy over the years has been the necessity of avoiding a major conventional land war in Asia. The underlying rationale for this strategy is that numerically superior enemy land forces would overwhelm our troops and their extensive supply lines, and would isolate them. The Nixon Doctrine of 1970 articulated this concern when it emphasized that our Asian allies would "bear the brunt of ground combat."<sup>28</sup> And yet, today, the United States has more than 40,000 troops stationed in South Korea--29,000 of them U.S. Army ground forces. This deployment is too large to be simply a "tripwire" and too small to prevent a full-scale surprise invasion from the North. Currently the DPRK has 842,000 active forces and approximately 5 million reserve militia compared with 629,000 ROK active and 4.5 million reserve forces.<sup>29</sup> Instead of serving as a deterrent to aggression, U.S. forces act as a lightning rod for local anti-American political elements, and constitute a considerable economic burden for the American taxpayer. This burden is particularly heavy when one considers that South Koreans devote only 4 percent of GNP to defense (compared to 7 percent for the United States), and yet the U.S. trade deficit with South Korea

has grown to the fifth largest in the world in 1987 at \$9.9 billion. The emergence of South Korea as an economic force in East Asia, her increasing access to U.S. markets, the success of the 1988 Olympic Games, and the changing dynamics of Sino-Soviet superpower politics seem to create conditions conducive to a reduction of U.S. ground forces in Korea without significant risk to U.S. interests in the region. In fact, such a reduction could enhance U.S. security interests overall by encouraging the Korean people to assume a larger portion of their own defense burden, and by accelerating the normalization of relations between North and South Korea.

Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base have long provided the United States with important strategic capabilities in East Asia. The geographical location of these bases and the local infrastructure that supports them cannot be readily duplicated elsewhere, although that option has been proposed. A developing local insurgency in the Philippines, political instability, and poor economic performance have given rise to substantial anti-Americanism. This, in turn, has led to violent attacks against American servicemen. For example, in April 1989, Col. James Rowe, Director of Ground Forces of the Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group, was assassinated by "sparrows" or armed city partisans of the NPA. Assuming that access to these bases continues to be a vital U.S. interest, some attention should be paid to improving their security and defenses and thus their personnel from local terrorist attacks. These key facilities appear to be at risk from a threat that was peripheral and relatively insignificant until very recently. Although the departure of the Marcos regime in 1986 reduced this threat temporarily, the failure of President Aquino to address and solve basic economic problems, the lack of land reform, domestic military unrest and continued coup attempts have all contributed to current instability and the public perception of chaos.

No country is more important to U.S. security interests in East Asia than Japan. This reality is currently reflected in the U.S. force structure deployed to Japan, and it flows from longstanding policies developed after World War II. As well, public opinion polls conducted in 1987 reflect both American public and leadership recognition that Japan is a "vital interest" of the United States. However, in recent years the American people have become increasingly concerned about the trade imbalance with Japan, the loss of U.S. jobs to Japanese competitors, Japan's continued maintenance of trade barriers for U.S. exports such as agricultural products, and the fact that Japan's share of its own defense burden is substantially less than that of the United States.<sup>30</sup> Although one can question whether these issues have been accurately portrayed, it is hard to doubt their negative impact on the American worker, consumer, and businessperson. For example, recent public opinion polls found that 79 percent of the respondents felt that "while the U.S. spends billions to defend Japan and Europe, they are winning the economic competition and taking away American jobs."<sup>31</sup> Decline in U.S. popular support for vital interests in Japan

could prompt a reduction of our commitments there. As a result of economic tensions and popular perceptions about our changing relationship to Japan, it may be increasingly difficult to justify the traditional post-World War II relationship where Japan has been an economic and military "free rider" of the United States.

Clearly, U.S. economic interests in Australia and New Zealand, do not justify additional military commitments--even if this were possible. In 1987, Australia ranked 17th in total trade with the United States while New Zealand was 40th.<sup>32</sup> New Zealand's nuclear-free policies have dealt a crippling blow to the ANZUS Pact, and it is likely that public support for this issue will expand in Australia as well.

Finally, it appears that the current Soviet leadership has taken steps to reduce Soviet offensive posture, in more than just rhetorical terms. Naval deployments and maneuvers have been reduced, the SRV was encouraged to withdraw from Cambodia, and the Soviets have reduced their troop deployments in Mongolia. Additionally, a rapprochement has been made with the PRC which should serve to reduce tensions in the region. These activities are consistent with Soviet actions elsewhere--such as the withdrawal from Afghanistan, the reduction of forces in Eastern Europe, and proposals for a united Germany. Although Soviet military capabilities continue to be substantial, recent developments suggest that Soviet actions and stated intentions reflect a real reduction of the overall threat in East Asia.

## CONCLUSIONS

Turning once again to the fundamental research question regarding U.S. commitments in East Asia, certain conclusions may be drawn from the assessment presented here.

- o U.S. national interests in East Asia are substantial and growing. This is particularly true of economic interests which have been expanding at a far faster rate than those in Europe. Coincident with the growth of these interests, however, has been the growing economic threat posed by the aggressive economies and trade practices of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan--important military allies in the post-World War II period.

- o The traditional military threat facing the United States in East Asia has declined. Although Soviet capabilities are substantial, the perceived threat has been reduced by new policies articulated by President Gorbachev. These policies, the U.S. "normalization" of relations with the PRC, and the Soviet rapprochement with the PRC also have worked to reduce the secondary threats posed by the DPRK and the SRV. The United States is no longer facing an aggressively expansionist Communist bloc in East Asia.

- o The emergence of new political and economic threats to



the United States in East Asia presents different challenges for U.S. policymakers--challenges for which there is no standard U.S. military response. Responding to these threats, and particularly to the political threat of anti-Americanism, with military force or "presence" exacerbates the problem, plays into the hands of our enemies, and undermines the overall security position of the United States in the region. By the same token, military forces have little if any application to most of the economic threats posed.

o In general, the American public does not favor sending U.S. troops to defend its Asian allies in the event of attack by Communist opponents, even though it recognizes the importance of these allies to U.S. interests in the region. This is particularly the case in South Korea, where only 24 percent of the U.S. public would favor sending troops to defend against an attack by North Korea. The message is clear, no more Vietnams!

o U.S. mutual defense treaty obligations, and especially the multilateral obligations established during the cold war, are coming unraveled. Except in the case of Taiwan, this trend appears to have been instigated by the non-U.S. parties to these treaties. Our allies no longer consider it in their national interest to "contain" the Sino-Soviet bloc. The strategy of containment that characterized the post-World War II environment in East Asia and elsewhere is dying, if not dead. This point was articulated by President George Bush last year when he stated:

Now is the time to move beyond containment, to a new policy for the 1990s--one that recognizes the full scope of change taking place around the world, and in the Soviet Union itself.<sup>33</sup>

o With the demise of the strategy of containment, U.S. policymakers must reevaluate the future of the policy of forward deployment of U.S. forces, and especially ground forces, in East Asia. The particular focus of this reevaluation should be on the 29,000 ground forces currently stationed in South Korea, as well as on those forces stationed in Japan and the Philippines.

o With the exception of Vietnam, U.S. strategic policy and military deployments in East Asia in the post-World War II period have in large part been successful. New political, economic and military realities call for new policies, however. An overall reduction of the forward deployed U.S. military forces in East Asia would seem to serve the demands of these new realities on both a domestic and an international level. What remains to be seen is whether the United States will recognize and respond to these realities in a pragmatic and timely fashion.

## ENDNOTES

1. Harry S. Truman, Memoirs: Years of Trial and Hope, Garden City, NJ: 1956, p. 106. Reprinted in Neuchterlein, America Overcommitted: United States National Interests in the 1980's, p. 105.

2. George Bush, State of the Union Address, January 31, 1990, reported in The New York Times, February 1, 1990, p. 1.

3. Ibid., p. A12.

4. Susanne M. Schafer, "U.S. Forces to be Reduced in South Korea," Associated Press, February 16, 1990.

5. Richard L. Armitage, "Patterns of Cooperation and Pacific Basin Security," speech delivered at the National Defense University on February 25, 1988, p. 4.

6. Ibid.; Neuchterlein, p. 6.

7. Reilly, American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy 1987, pp. 16-32.

8. Hong Kong ranked 10th in imports to the United States in 1987 and 15th in exports, while the PRC was 12th and 17th respectively. These figures are significant when one considers the relative size of the two entities. Total trade figures for 1987 place Australia 17th, the Philippines 26th, and New Zealand 40th, overall. This information was published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, 1987 U.S. Foreign Trade Highlights, pp. 21 and A-018. See Table 2 for additional details.

9. Ibid., p. A-018. For purposes of this comparison, the European Community is considered to consist of the following nations: West Germany, United Kingdom, France, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Spain, Ireland and Denmark. Trade with Greece and Portugal was too insignificant to be listed by the Department of Commerce.

10. U.S. Army, Regional Requirements 2004: Pacific, pp. 6-7.

11. Peter Brimelow, "Is the Reagan Prosperity for Real?", Forbes, October 31, 1988, pp. 85-87.

12. According to Charles Waterman, who wrote an article titled "Soviets Back Expansionist Tendencies," printed in the Christian Science Monitor on September 10, 1986, U.S. naval and marine forces in the Pacific outnumber those of the Soviet Union by a figure of 259,000 to 134,000. As well, the U.S. deploys more aircraft carriers, cruisers, and destroyers than the Soviets.

13. For a listing of the East Asian naval order of battle, see the Pacific Defense Reporter, May 1985.

14. Michael R. Gordon, "Soviets Reduce Deployments," The Day, July 17, 1988, p. A3.
15. FBIS-SOV-86-145, July 29, 1986, Vol. III, No.145, pp. R17-R18.
16. Gerald Segal, "Informal Arms Control: The Asian Road to Conventional Reductions," Arms Control Today, May 1989, p. 16.
17. Daniel Benjamin, "State of Siege," Time, May 29, 1989, p. 44.
18. Time, July 4, 1988, p. 28.
19. Shaver, "Force Structures: The United States and Europe in the Coming Decade," Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1989, p. 29.
20. Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation, New York: W.W. Norton Co. Inc., 1969, pp. 356-457. Reprinted in Neuchterlein, p. 136.
21. Ibid., Neuchterlein, p. 204. The terms "direct or indirect aggression" or "armed attack" are contained in the bilateral treaties between the United States and Japan, South Korea and the Philippines.
22. U.S. Department of State, Treaties in Force, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988, pp. 1-327.
23. As of September 1986, the United States suspended obligations to New Zealand under the treaty.
24. U.S. Congress, The United States Statutes at Large, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981, pp. 14-15.
25. T.B. Millar, Current International Treaties, New York: New York University Press, 1984, p. 2.
26. Ibid. pp. 2-3.
27. Sheldon Simon, The Future of Asian-Pacific Security Collaboration, Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1984, p. 15.
28. Ibid.; Neuchterlein, p. 204.
29. International Institute of Strategic Studies, The Military Balance 1988-89; Pacific Defence Reporter, Vol. XV, No. 6/7, December 1988/January 1989, pp. 180-181.
30. In 1986, Japanese defense spending as a percentage of gross domestic product was about 1 percent while we expended almost 7 percent. Yet in 1986, the United States and Japan both had an annual per capita GDP of between \$16-17,000. These figures show that while there is equal ability to pay, Japan spends far less. The fact that Japan is constitutionally limited in what

she can spend is a fine point that is lost to most Americans. These figures come from Frank C. Carlucci, Report on Allied Contribution to the Common Defense, Washington, DC: Department of Defense, April 1988, p.15.

31. John Doble, US-Soviet Relations in the Year 2010: Americans Look to the Future, p. 66. A recent advertisement for Fortune magazine depicts the darkened and ominous face of a Japanese male who makes the chilling statement, "You Americans don't make anything we want to buy." This ad was run in Time magazine the spring of 1989. The fact that a prominent American business publication is promoting anti-Japanese sentiments does not augur well for the future popularity of Japan.

32. Ibid; U.S. Foreign Trade Highlights, p. A-018.

33. "Soviet Deeds, American Words," The New York Times, May 14, 1989, p. 22E.

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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) The forward deployment of U.S. military forces around the world has been an important aspect of the strategy of containment since the late 1940s. In East Asia the principal purpose of this strategy has been to secure U.S. interests against the Sino-Soviet military threat.  Within the past 5 years the cost effectiveness and necessity of these forward deployments have been called into question by		

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national, congressional and academic leaders. Their skepticism is based primarily on a perceived reduction of the Sino-Soviet threat, increased costs of forward troop deployment, unfavorable trade balances with East Asian allies and public resistance to U.S. military involvement abroad.

This paper explores the interlocking issues of U.S. national interests, foreign threats and military obligations in East Asia; political, military and economic factors are considered, and an effort is made to gauge U.S. public opinion on these issues.

It is concluded that U.S. national interests in East Asia are growing at a faster rate than those in Europe. At the same time, the traditional military threat has declined, and there are newly emerging political and economic threats for which there are no standard military responses. Long-standing military alliances are coming unraveled and the U.S. public no longer strongly favors sending "American boys" to defend Asian allies. New political, economic and military realities in East Asia call for new strategic policies.

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